

# Textu(r)al Undercoding and the Music of the Rock Band Rush: String Quartets, Death Metal, Trip-Hop, and other Tributes

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## Rush

### **Pre-professional period** (1968-69)

Original members included: Alex Lifeson (b. 1953), John Rutsey (b. 1953)

Other early member: Geddy Lee (b. 1953)

### **Early professional period** (1969-74: one single, one album)

Lee, Lifeson, Rutsey; mainly original songs by 1971 (Led Zeppelin influence)

Single: "Not Fade Away" (1973, cover version of original by Buddy Holly, 1957-58)

Album: *Rush* (1974, recorded 1973), including "Working Man" (written in 1971)

### **1974 – 2004 period** (28 albums; 22 U.S. gold, platinum, or multi-platinum, 142 songs)

Geddy Lee's virtuosic bass playing and countertenor (high, falsetto-related) singing

Alex Lifeson's precise-yet-tuneful guitar playing

Neil Peart's (b. 1952) elaborately constructed drumming and lyrics

### **1974-78** (after *Rush*, five more studio albums, one live album, one anthology)

individualism & progressive ("art") rock influences, with heavy metal & hard rock

example: "2112" (title suite from *2112*, 1976)

examples: "Closer to the Heart," "Xanadu," "Cygnus X-1" (*A Farewell to Kings*, 1977)

example: "The Trees" (from *Hemispheres*, 1978)

### **1980-89** (six studio albums, one live album)

toning down the more extreme individualism and "prog" (progressive) features

other influences (post-punk, jazz-rock, synth-rock, music technology)

examples:

*Permanent Waves* (1980, including "The Spirit of Radio," "Freewill")

*Moving Pictures* (1981, incl. "Tom Sawyer," "Red Barchetta," "YYZ," "Limelight")

*Signals* (1982, incl. "Subdivisions," "New World Man")

*Power Windows* (1985, including "The Big Money")

*Hold Your Fire* (1987, including "Time Stand Still")

### **1989-2004** (six studio albums, three live albums, four anthologies)

toning down use of music technology (synths, samplers, etc.)

other influences (hard alternative, progressive heavy metal, BritPop)

other projects, "sabbatical" (1998-2000), new album (2002)

examples:

*Roll the Bones* (1991, including "Dreamline," "Roll the Bones")

*Counterparts* (1993, including "Stick It Out," "Nobody's Hero")

*Test for Echo* (1996, including "Test for Echo," "Driven")

*Vapor Trails* (2002, including "One Little Victory," "Ceiling Unlimited")



**“Tom Sawyer” (Rush, *Moving Pictures*, 1981; by Lee, Lifeson, Peart, and Dubois)**

synth & drums (0:00-0:05)	instrumental section, 7/4 (1:33-2:32)
vocal introduction (0:05-0:11)	expanded main “swagger” intro (2:32-2:43)
main “swagger” introduction (0:11-0:22)	Verse 2 (2:43-2:56)
main “swagger” introduction (0:11-0:22)	instrumental verse (2:56-3:08)
Verse 1, with “swagger” (0:22-0:36)	bridge (3:08-3:29)
instrumental verse (0:36-0:47)	“chorus” (3:29-3:48)
bridge (0:47-1:08)	expanded vocal introduction (3:48-3:57)
“chorus” (1:08-1:28)	coda, faded (3:57-4:33)
new vocal introduction (1:28-1:33)	

**Example 2: Rush, “Tom Sawyer,” 7/4 instrumental pattern**

pattern at various pitch levels, then in bass (for guitar solo), guitar joins at end of solo

♩ = 176

**Example 3: Rush, “Tom Sawyer,” Verses 1 and 2**

♩ = 88

Though his mind is not for rent, don't put him down as arrogant.  
No, his mind is not for rent to any god or government.

**SWAGGER-->**

(small notes for v. 2)

his re - serve a quiet defense - rid - ing  
Always hopeful yet discontent, - he knows chang -

out the days ev - ents: **LINKING** the but riv - er.  
es aren't per - ma - nent, Change is.

# Discography-Videography

## Rush

*Permanent Waves* (Mercury-Anthem, 1980), including “The Spirit of Radio”

*Moving Pictures* (Mercury-Anthem, 1981), including “Tom Sawyer”

*Chronicles: The Video Collection* (Anthem, 1990), including “Tom Sawyer”

## Other

Barenaked Ladies—*Gordon* (Warner-Sire, 1992), including “Grade 9”

*Small Soldiers* (DreamWorks, 1998), including DJ Z-Trip’s remix of “Tom Sawyer”

*Red Star: Tribute to Rush* (Dwell, 1999), including Disarray’s version of “Tom Sawyer”

Rachel Barton/Stringendo—*Storming the Citadel* (Cacophony, 1997-98),

including Barton’s arrangement of “The Spirit of Radio” and other rock songs

*Exit . . . Stage Right: The String Quartet Tribute to Rush* (Vitamin, 2002),

comprising “The Spirit of Radio,” “Tom Sawyer,” and ten other Rush songs

Deadsy—“Tom Sawyer” (2002, recorded 1999)

Simon & Garfunkel—“The Sounds of Silence” (1965)

The Vince Guaraldi Trio—“Linus and Lucy” (1964)

*Exit . . . Stage Left* (1981)



*Exit . . . Stage Right* (2002)

